

the **Gateway**

USAFE's Best Small Funded Newspaper for 2003

Vol. 61, No. 19, Sept. 30, 2005, Rhein-Main AB, Germany



Photo by Staff Sgt. Marie Cassetty

60 years of airlift legacy comes to a close

Tech. Sgt. Shawn Jewett, a crew chief deployed to Rhein-Main from McChord Air Force Base, Wash., salutes as the final scheduled military flight leaves Rhein-Main

Monday. Maj. Ed Evans from the Mississippi Air National Guard's 172nd Airlift Wing in Jackson, Miss., piloted the C-17 Globemaster III back to the states.

A final farewell – Rhein-Main's legacy

By Col. Brad Denison

469th Air Base Group commander

As we take one more step toward the eventual closure of Rhein-Main Air Base with the airlift mission stopping today, it is with "heartfelt thanks" to every member of Team Rhein-Main.

For the past 27 months I've witnessed some remarkable professionals meet every challenge head-on and always, without fail, end up with a win-win situation.

Sure we've experienced a few minor deviations, but for the most part we've remained focused on our mission and kept things off of senior leadership's radar scope. We've had visits from both the U.S. Air Forces in Europe Commander and the

Commander of Air Mobility Command, with huge accolades from both leaders for the phenomenal job our professionals have done!

We've set records with the number of passengers we've handled as they either transitioned through our terminal or base hotel. Always with the same remarkable expertise and warm smile our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines came to expect at Rhein-Main Air Base.

Our Distinguished Visitor's list is way too big to discuss in length, but to name just a few — the President of the United States and First Lady; Secretary of State; President of Afghanistan; Chancellor of Germany; Chairman and Vice

See **Farewell**, Page 2

This is the final base newspaper edition in the history of Rhein-Main. Auf Wiedersehen!



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Matt Summers

Final DV visit

The Honorable P. Jackson Bell, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Logistics and Materiel Readiness, is greeted by Col. Brad Denison, 469th Air Base Group commander and Oscar Mendez, U.S. Army Europe Visitor Coordination Center, Wednesday outside the UVCC in Bldg. 27. Mr. Bell had the honor of being the final distinguished visitor to pass through the UVCC at Rhein-Main.

FAREWELL, from Page 1

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; both the Commander and Deputy Commander of European Command; plus numerous U.S. Senators and Congressional Representatives; so you see we've been pretty busy and of course much of this went on behind the scenes.

Today, as we celebrate the "Mission Closure" and another "Hail & Farewell", we can all be proud of the mission we've completed. It has definitely been done with style and grace.

In just 10 short days we will participate and witness the huge closure ceremony hosted by the U.S. Air Forces in Europe Commander and supported by our great friends at the FRAPORT.

I hope each of you gets a chance to attend and more importantly, you should be very proud of your success. Rhein-Main's history is rich and deep, so in the many years to come, never forget you were part of history—making the mission happen 24/7 and 365 days a year!

Finally, I would like to close by saying it has been a real honor leading Rhein-Main and although we still have three months to go, many will be departing within the next couple of weeks.

Most, if not all of our tenants will soon be gone and it

goes without saying — they too have contributed to our many successes!

Again, without mentioning each and every tenant, allow me to single out the State Department, Army and Air Force Exchange Service, Defense Commissary Agency, USO, 64th Replacement Company, Det. 1 2nd Air Postal Squadron, and our protocol friends at the U.S. Army Europe Visitor

Coordination Center who have all been super contributors to our mission success.

Also, a special "thanks" goes to the professional men and women of the 726th Air Mobility Squadron and we wish them all good luck, as they transition their squadron to Spangdahlem Air Base. It has been a sprint to the finish line and you've really demonstrated your professionalism each step of the way!

Last, but certainly not least, to the men and women of the 469th Air Base Group — you're absolutely the best and most professional group of people I've worked with in 26-plus years of service.

I really owe you all a great deal of gratitude for your professionalism and dedication to successfully completing our mission.

In December, when we hand the keys over, I will do so with fond

memories of my time leading what I believe is the best geographically separated unit in USAFE.

Again, "thanks" to each and everyone of you for making my job so much fun and less difficult. Godspeed to you all!



Col. Brad Denison

Farewell and thanks from 64th RC

By Maj. Jerry Wood
64th Replacement Company
commander

In September 2004, I wrote an article for *the Gateway* entitled, "One Team.....One Fight!"

In my article I addressed the effects of the July 2004 flood and the impact it had on the numerous units and agencies throughout Rhein-Main. I spoke of the teamwork and cooperative spirit amongst all personnel - Soldiers, Airmen and civilians. Now, one year later, my belief in that spirit is even stronger.

We, the Rhein-Main Team, are about to close the gates one last time to an historic base that has served millions of Americans and our allied partners for many decades.

From an Army perspective, Rhein-Main has lived up to its motto "Gateway to Europe". Today, all 64th Replacement Company operations will come to a close at Rhein-Main. With that closure marks the end of a 25-year presence of the 21st Replacement Battalion and the 64th Replacement Company providing personnel replacement operations.

To the best I can figure, roughly 1,250,000 PCSing Army Soldiers and



(Above) The 21st Replacement Battalion and 64th Replacement Company at Rhein-Main have served more than 9 million customers in one form or another since 1980. More than 7 million meals were served in the Army Dining Facility during the same period and 750,000 have acquired billeting at the company's lodging facility.



Courtesy photos

family members have processed through Rhein-Main. More than 7,000,000 meals have been served in the 64th RC dining facility, serving a variety of personnel from Soldiers and Airmen to a Polish youth soccer team.

Nearly 750,000 personnel have received billeting and, during the past couple of years, approximately 450,000 deployed personnel have processed through the 64th RC and 464th RC going to and from Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom for well deserved R&R.

This total of 9,450,000 customers served in one form or fashion does not include the multitude of personnel that processed through in support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the Balkans and deployment and redeployments for OEF and OIF.

It's hard to close the doors at Rhein-Main and say farewell to a home

that has been so supportive of the mission, but with the closure comes the opportunity to establish a renewed sense of responsibility and dedication with our new facilities in Hanau.

It will take time to establish the long standing routines developed over the years, but the teamwork and spirit of cooperation that came from "Team Rhein-Main" will be a legacy difficult to match.

As the 64th RC commander, I am proud and deeply honored to have served as a member of such a great team.

On behalf of ALL the Soldiers and civilians that have served with the 21st RB and the 64th RC for the last quarter of a century, I simply say THANKS.

Thank you Rhein-Main for all you have provided. Your facilities may be taken away and replaced by others, but you will forever be in our hearts and memories!



Maj. Jerry Wood

What memory will you take with you from Rhein-Main?



Paul Molnar

"Rhein-Main Air Base supporting the Cold War effort and being prepared to defend itself. The solidarity of base personnel in handling any crisis, any contingency, any time as long as the mission called. An honorable place to serve."



Dieter Haase

"Rhein-Main was the first base to have planes moving cargo to Bosnia and Kosovo, we were pumping 1 million gallons of fuel a day."



Tech. Sgt. Yvette Munoz

"All the people I got to work with and the memories of friends and good times."



Tech. Sgt. Dave Gallagher

"Representing Rhein-Main in the U.S. Army Europe Mountain Biking Series and meeting my wife at Tuesday night skate in Frankfurt."



Robert Keffer

"I have many vivid memories to reflect upon since I arrived in October 1974. Many huge operations that will not be forgotten are the first and second Gulf Wars; Joint Endeavor in Bosnia; Allied Force in Kosovo and other more tragic ones like the bombing of the base headquarters building and identifying the remains of 244 Marines killed in the Beirut bombing. But, my best memory is the return of 52 American military and civilians held hostage in Iran for 444 days. They arrived in two C-9 Nightingale aircraft from Rhein-Main on a very cold morning Jan. 21, 1981. I worked for combat camera at the time and was fortunate enough to document their arrival with a 16mm camera. I met many of the hostages and their joy in returning was an overwhelming experience. They stayed in the Wiesbaden Hospital for five days and left entirely rejuvenated through Rhein-Main Air Base – "Gateway to Europe".

Graphics by Tech. Sgt. Gary Thacker

the *Gateway*

Editorial Staff

Col. Bradley Denison.....Commander
1st Lt. Uriah Orland.....Chief, Public Affairs
Tech. Sgt. Matt Summers.....Editor
Airman 1st Class Eric Donner.....Staff Writer

This funded Air Force newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military service overseas. Contents of *the Gateway* are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Air Force.

The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the public affairs office, Rhein-Main AB, Germany. Printing service is provided by ABC Druck, Liederbach. People may submit articles for publication to the public affairs office, Bldg. 347, Room 139,

or email them to pa@rheinmain.af.mil. Submission by deadline does not guarantee publication, however, all articles will be considered. The staff may be reached by calling 330-7804. All photos are property of the U.S. Air Force unless otherwise noted.

*This is the final edition
of the Gateway newspaper.*

726th AMS transitions to Spang

**By Airman 1st Class
Eric Donner**
Public Affairs

Members of the 726th Air Mobility Squadron cased the squadron's colors during a transfer ceremony Wednesday in Gate 1 of the Air Mobility Command passenger terminal at Rhein-Main. The 726th AMS begins operations at Spangdahlem Air Base Oct. 1.

"It is sad to see this great operation come to an end at this location, but I'm looking forward to starting it again at Spangdahlem," said Lt. Col Jim Kirk, 726th commander, who took over during a change-of-command ceremony today.

The 726th AMS traces its history as Rhein-Main's largest tenant unit to July 1994, when the 362nd Aerial Port was inactivated and the 626th Air Mobility Support Squadron began operations. An AMC-wide redesignation in 2001 brought about the 726th AMS.

During the past four years the 726th AMS has helped Rhein-Main continue its legacy as the "Gateway to Europe". In 2004, the 726th AMS moved more than 624,000 passengers, handled more than 14,000 aircraft and 89,000 short tons of cargo.



Lt. Col. Michael Polhemus

The 726th AMS flying mission ends today at approximately 4:00 p.m. with the departure of the last passenger plane.

During the transfer ceremony, a three-person honor guard cased the squadron colors and placed the flag in a box for transport to Spangdahlem aboard a piece of equipment loading machinery.

"Just this week people have been working around the clock



Photo by Airman 1st Class Eric Donner

A 726th Air Mobility Squadron honor guard cased the squadron colors during a mission transfer ceremony Wednesday in the Air Mobility Command Passenger Terminal.

to get ready for business," said Colonel Kirk. "Starting Saturday we will began 24 hour operations."

The 726th AMS will continue its mobility mission at Spangdahlem with 13-wide body parking positions, a state-of-the-art fuel hydrant system and newly constructed consolidated facilities for all mobility functions, according to Colonel Kirk.

The more than 120 squadron members will provide command and control, maintenance and aerial port support for AMC's tanker and airlift missions.

Recent 726th AMS awards

Air Force level

2003 - Maintenance Effectiveness Award
2002 - En Route Squadron of the Year; Supply Effectiveness Award and Maintenance Effectiveness Award

Air Mobility Command level

2004 - Fleet Services Flight of the Year; Passenger Services Flight of the Year and Air Mobility Command and Control Flight
2003 - Logistics Readiness Effectiveness Award and Best Air Transportation Function

21st Expeditionary Mobility Task Force level

2004 - Best Air Transportation Function and Best Command and Control Function

To Save a City

The Berlin Airlift 1948-1949



The Berlin Airlift began June 26, 1948 as an emergency operation to supply food and fuel to the 2.5 million blockaded citizens of the three Western Zones of the city of Berlin. The first day of the airlift, 32 flights of C-47s carried 80 tons of supplies from Wiesbaden Air Base to Tempelhof Airport. Flights were also made from Rhein-Main Air Base and two other bases in West Germany.

Two days after the first flight of supplies to Berlin, "Operation Vittles" was organized under Gen. Curtis E. LeMay. Thirty-five C-54 aircraft were immediately transferred from bases in Alaska, the Caribbean and the United States to be used in transporting supplies to Berlin. On June 28, 1948 the Royal Air Force began airlifting supplies from bases in the British Zone of West Germany.

Col. Harry Immel was one of the first to fly into Berlin with supplies in the spring of 1948, even before the official start of the Berlin Airlift in June.

"I flew into Tempelhof in a B-17, with the bombays filled with 2,000 pounds of sugar," he recalled. "I think it was one of the first planes that flew over Berlin *without* bombs."

Immel went on to make a

total of 403 flights into Berlin, more than any other pilot. Most of his flights were in a C-54 Skymaster, the workhorse of the airlift. "I'm proud to say that I missed only one approach in that whole time," he said.

Immel also holds the distinction of flying the last official mission of the Berlin Airlift, on Sept. 30, 1949. He retired from the Air Force in July 1970 after nearly 30



years of service.

"We had a lot of eager flyers, young pilots who wanted to build up their experience. For a while after the war, all you did was bore holes in the sky to get your flying time. But this was a real mission, a true humanitarian need," he said.

ty

In mid-April 1949, "Maximum Effort Day", resulted in 12,940 tons of cargo delivered to Berlin by 1,398 flights. The control tower at Rhein-Main logged 635 takeoffs and landings.

Within three weeks the airlift was well under way with 54 C-54 Skymasters and 105 C-47 Skytrains carrying the load of the U.S. effort supported by 40 RAF Yorks and 50 Dakotas. Together they delivered 2,250 tons of supplies to

Corps provided cargo trucks and airfield engineers. German civilians aided the effort both in West Germany and in Berlin.

The Berlin Airlift officially ended Sept. 30, 1949. More than 2.3 million tons of food, coal and supplies were delivered to Berlin by air during the 15-month airlift. There were a total of 277,264 flights.

Many significant achievements in transport and aviation history were produced by the Berlin Airlift. It was an unforgettable demonstration of Allied teamwork among American, British, French and German citizens.

The Berlin Airlift used loading fields at Rhein-Main, Fassburg, Celle, Wunstorf, Luebeck, Fuhlsbuettel and Wiesbaden, and a seaplane base at Schleswigland. These bases and the turn-around fields in Berlin at Gatow (British), Tegel (French) and Tempelhof (American) proved that anything within reason could be airlifted from any place in the world.

Berlin Airlift memorials



Berlin in a single day. Maj. Gen. William H. Tunner, World War II veteran of the China-Burma-India airlift, commanded the combined American-British effort, including two U.S. Navy squadrons. By November 1948 the Navy was unloading huge quantities of aviation fuel at Bremerhaven as Army Transport



stand at Tempelhof Airport in Berlin and at Rhein-Main. The monument at Rhein-Main was dedicated in June 1985 and is a replica of the one dedicated in Berlin in 1951.

(Capt. Ruth Larson, 89th Airlift Wing Public Affairs, contributed to this story.)

The Candy Bomber

The man who brought chocolate, smiles to Berlin youngsters

By Chief Master Sgt. Tom Kuhn
U.S. Air Force Reserve Public Affairs

At the end of World War II, Berlin ended up 100 miles inside Soviet-controlled territory after the Allies partitioned Germany into east and west. In an attempt to squeeze the Allies out, Josef Stalin closed off all routes to Berlin. The Allies responded with an around-the-clock airlift to keep the city open. Retired Col. Gail Halvorsen volunteered, and from July 1948 until February 1949, he flew 126 missions between Rhein-Main Air Base in Frankfurt and Tempelhof Air Field in Berlin. His approaches, with a load of food or coal aboard, took him over a sea of bombed-out buildings.

It was after one of his early missions that Colonel Halvorsen hitched a ride back to Berlin and took a jeep on a sight-seeing camera tour. He visited the Brandenburg Gate and Hitler's bunker, but it was near the approaches to Tempelhof that he met the children. They stood on the other side of a barbed-wire fence, and one who spoke English called to him.

"They started giving me a lecture on freedom," he said. "They said, 'You don't have to give us enough to eat, just a little. Someday, we'll have enough to eat. But if we're losing freedom, we'll never get it back.'"

No beggars

He noticed that none begged. Colonel Halvorsen remembered the two sticks of Wrigley's Doublemint gum in his pocket – the last of his own candy ration. He tore the sticks in half and passed them through the fence. "The kids who got the gum, their eyes got real wide," he said. "The other kids just wanted a piece of the wrapper. They smelled the foil, and their eyes got wide, too."

Colonel Halvorsen told them if they would share, he would

drop more gum the next day from his airplane. How would they know his plane? "I told them I would wiggle the wings."

Back at Frankfurt, "I got my ration, and the co-pilot gave me his. We tied gum and even chocolate to parachutes made of string and hankies. On our next flight into Tempelhof, out it went to the waiting children.

"Each week, there were more and more kids, so we had to drop more candy," he recalled. "The kids were waving. I thought we would get in trouble. You had to have permission to drop things out of airplanes.

"The air drops continued for three weeks. Then a Berlin newspaper published a picture of the Candy Bomber in action and a stack of children's thank-you letters began arriving at Tempelhof.

"Nobody knew until that paper came out," Colonel Halvorsen said. He laughs now, but it was serious business then. "The colonel chewed me out." He showed Colonel Halvorsen the picture of little parachutes coming out of his C-54. It was on page one.

"By then, the story was all over

the world," Colonel Halvorsen said.

"The general [Maj. Gen. William H. Tunner] thought it was a good idea. Fellow pilots gave me their candy rations" and Operation Little Vittles was underway.

So much candy was dropped "we ran out of parachutes," he said. "We made them from old shirts and cloth. Back at Rhein-Main, the NCO and officers wives clubs made parachutes."

